

Town and County Directories in England and Wales, 1677–1822.

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A directory was a tool of trade and social life in the commercialized society of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain. It normally contained a substantial list of tradesmen, manufacturers, merchants, and professional men with their addresses (office and/or home), as well as lists of magistrates, country gentlemen, inns, posts, coaches, and other public facilities. The title page of the first Manchester directory may be quoted in full to reproduce the atmosphere of the thriving town in the industrial North in the early 1770s:

The/Manchester Directory,/For the Year 1772./Containing an Alphabetical List of the / Merchants, Tradesmen, / And Principal Inhabitants / In the Town of / Manchester, / With / The Situation of their respective Warehouses, / And Places of Abode. / Also Separate Lists of / The Country Tradesmen, with their Warehouses in Manchester. / The Officers of the Infirmary and Lunatic Hospital. / Of the Excise. / The principal Whitsters. / Stage-Coaches, Waggons, and Carriers, with their Days of coming in and going out. / The Vessels to and from Liverpool, upon the Old Navigation, and Duke of Bridgewater's Canal; and their Agents. / Manchester Bank and Insurance Office. / His Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and near Manchester. / And The / Committee for the Detection and Prosecution of Felons, / and Receivers of stolen and embezzled Goods.

London: / Printed for the Author; and sold by R. Baldwin, / No. 47, Paternoster-row; / And by the Author at Manchester.

It was well used when published, and as a historical source its value, especially if of local publication and when used with other supportive data, is inexhaustible. Local historians have found a good check-list in Jane E. Norton's *Guide to the National and Provincial Directories of England and Wales, excluding London, published before 1856* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1950). Lancashire is well covered by G. H. Tupling & Sidney Horrocks (eds), *Lancashire Directories, 1684–1957* (Manchester: Joint Committee on the Lancashire Bibliography, 1968).

The present list does not claim anything original, as it is based not upon any purpose-built research, but upon the perusal of commonly used catalogues and guides, and the *British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books* (under Directories, and names of each town). Its merit is that it provides a chronological list of directory-publishing towns in the age of the industrial revolution.

The chronological order does not correspond exactly with any ranking of the towns according to size, but represents their commercial and social importance during the period, and often peculiar eagerness of an inhabitant to publish a directory, as at Aberystwyth (1816). Apart from London, the earliest English directories came out at Birmingham and Liverpool during the 1760s. The first national directory, that which covered more than a few towns all over the country, was William Bailey's *Northern Directory for 1781*. It contained, as the title goes, 'Every principal town from the River Trent to Berwick-upon-Tweed, with London and Westminster, Edinburgh and Glasgow'. The increasing prosperity and commercial importance of the industrial North, as well as the sustaining prominent towns of England and Scotland, is manifest. The first editions of other national directories are included, i. e. Tunncliff's (1787), *The Universal British Directory* (1790), Bisset's (1800), Holden's (1805), and Pigot's *Commercial* (1814). They and their subsequent issues interfered with certain publications of local directories. This was definitely the case after the successful inauguration of Pigot's *London and Provincial* in 1822. By the early 1820s an exact chronology of first local directories becomes more or less insignificant. The late appearance of directories for Oxford and Cambridge (in 1835 and 1851 respectively) can be explained by the fact that the two universities and their colleges remained self-contained, and the commercial network of the general public had not grown sufficiently for the two towns to publish their own directories. Therefore, the list ends in 1822, the year when the two series of modern directories were inaugurated: Edward Baines' *Yorkshire*, and Pigot's *London and Provincial*.

Directories for a county are also given where they came out separately from those for the county towns. They are useful for urban historians, especially if they came out earlier and with more pages than those for several towns in the county, as in Hampshire (its directory published in 1784, followed by Southampton in 1803, and Winchester in 1854), in Kent (1803), where no specific directory for

Canterbury was published till 1838, and in Lincolnshire (1826, followed by the cathedral city in 1843). But, the case is almost the reverse in Devon, where no county directory appeared until 1850, while Exeter, the county town, produced one from 1807. This appeared almost annually from 1825, and included some information for the Devonshire towns. Normally county directories should be consulted as a complement to the county town directories: no separate directory for the town of Lancaster was published until 1881, but several for the county, which contained valuable information for the town itself;—Before 1855 only two separate directories were published for the city of York, but 26 for the whole county.

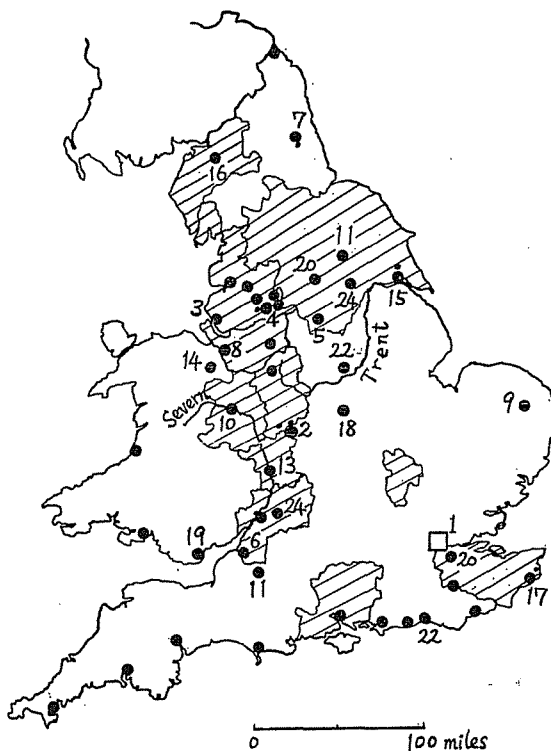
Names of towns in England and Wales are appended by the (pre-1974) counties in parentheses in abbreviated form, except London and where apparently superfluous. I follow C. R. Elrington (ed.), *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Handbook for Editors and Authors* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1970) for abbreviations. Short title of the directory and the name of the author/compiler/publisher follow in each entry for the ease of identification and to indicate their variety and possible influences. Those numerous historical, topographical and antiquarian works of the period which do not contain directories, are of course excluded here. I add the number of versions of directories (from the first until 1855 inclusive) of each town and county in square brackets, in order to indicate the significance and popularity of the publication during the period. I must admit that there have been more detailed researches into south-east Lancashire towns than for elsewhere in England and Wales. My bias has been and is towards the social history of Manchester and its environs.

I have included the earliest known directories for Paris, Dublin, and Edinburgh to provide a comparison.

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Towns (dotted) and counties (shaded) in England and Wales with their own directories, 1677-1822.

Numbers are by chronological order of the earliest directory for the town before 1801 (1: London, to 24: Cheltenham and Selby). Smaller dots are for the satellite towns attached to the main (Walsall and Wolverhampton to Birmingham (2), Salford to Manchester (4), etc.): See the list.



1677 (1) London

A Collection of the Names of the Merchants living in and about the City of London ... directing to the Place of their Abode, by Samuel Lee.

1691 Paris

Les Adresses de la Ville de Paris, avec le trésor des almanach, livre commode en tous lieux, en tous temps et en toutes conditions, par Abraham du Pradel [Nicolas Blégnny].

1752 Dublin

The Dublin Directory for 1752, by J. Watson.

- 1763 (2) Birmingham (Warws.) [48]
 No copies found for the first (1763) and second (1764) editions. *Sketchley's Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Walsall Directory*, 3rd ed., 1767, by James Sketchley.
- 1766 (3) Liverpool (Lancs.) [51]
The Liverpool Directory for 1766, by John Gore.
- 1772 (4) Manchester & Salford (Lancs.) [47]
The Manchester Directory for 1772, by Elizabeth Raffald.
- 1773 Edinburgh
Williamson's Directory for the City of Edinburgh, Canongate, Leith and Suburbs, by Peter Williamson.
- 1774 (5) Sheffield (Yorks.) [13]
Sketchley's Sheffield Directory, by Samuel & T. Sketchley.
- 1775 (6) Bristol (Glos.) [68]
Sketchley's Bristol Directory, by James Sketchley.
- 1778 (7) Newcastle-on-Tyne (Northumb.) & Gateshead (co. Dur.) [13]
Whitehead's Newcastle Directory for 1778, by William Whitehead.
- 1781 *Bailey's Northern Directory for 1781: Containing Every Principal Town from the River Trent to Berwick-upon-Tweed; with London and Westminster, Edinburgh and Glasgow*, by William Bailey of Birmingham and London.
- 1781 (8) Chester & Cheshire [12]
The Chester Guide ... to which is added a Directory of the City and Market Towns in the County, by Peter Broster.
- 1783 (9) Norwich (Norf.) [8]
The Norwich Directory: Or, Gentlemen and Tradesmen's Assistant, by William Chase.
- 1784 Hampshire [3]
The Hampshire Directory, by J. Sadler.
- 1785 Bedfordshire [1]
The Merchants' Miscellany and Travellers' Complete Compendium ... of the County of Bedford, by John Franklin Hennington.
- 1786 (10) Shrewsbury & Shropshire [5]
The Shrewsbury Guide and Salopian Directory, by Thomas Minshull.

- 1787 (11) Bath (Som.) [18]
The Bristol and Bath Directory, by William Bailey.
- 1787 Lancashire [18]
A Topographical Survey of the Counties of Stafford, Chester, and Lancaster,
 by William Tunnicliff.
- 1787 Staffordshire [10]
ibid.
- 1787 (11) York (Yorks.) [2]
The York Guide ... to which is added an Alphabetical Directory, by A. Ward.
- 1788 (13) Worcester (Worcs.) [10]
The Worcester Directory, by John Grundy.
- 1789 (14) Wrexham (Denb.) [3]
The Directory and Guide for Chester ... and Wrexham, by William Cowdroy.
- 1790 *The Universal British Directory of Trade and Commerce*, by Peter Barfoot
 & John Wilkes, both of Hampshire.
- 1791 (15) Hull & Beverley (Yorks.) [17]
Battle's Hull Directory for 1791, by Robert G. Battle.
- 1792 (16) Carlisle (Cumb.) [6]
The Carlisle Directory and Guide, by Lancelot Smith.
- 1792 (16) Dover & Deal (Kent) [1]
The Dover and Deal Directory and Guide, by J. Horn.
- 1794 (18) Leicester (Leics.) [4]
The Leicester Directory, by Richard Weston.
- 1796 (19) Cardiff (Glam.) [5]
A Complete Directory and Guide to Cardiff, by John Bird.
- 1797 (20) Bromley (Kent) [1]
An Accurate Description of Bromley, by Thomas Wilson.
- 1797 (20) Leeds (Yorks.) [15]
A History of Leeds ... to which is added a Leeds Directory, by Griffith Wright.
- 1799 (22) Brighton (Suss.) [19]
The Brighthelmston Directory for 1799, by Edward Cobby.
- 1799 (22) Nottingham (Notts.) [10]
The Nottingham Directory, by Edward Willoughby.

- 1800 *Bisset's Grand National Directory, or Literary and Commercial Iconography*,
by James Bisset of Birmingham.
- 1800 (24) Cheltenham (Glos.) [31]
Cheltenham Directory, 1800, by J. Shenton.
- 1800 (24) Selby (Yorks.) [1]
The History of Selby, by James Mountain.
- 1802 Gloucester (Glos.) [3]
The Gloucester New Guide, by Robert Raikes.
- 1802 Swansea (Glam.) [2]
The Swansea Guide, by Zecharias Bevan Morris.
- 1803 Kent [11]
An Historical Sketch of Kent, by W. Finch.
- 1803 Southampton (Hants) [12]
The Directory for Southampton, by A. Cunningham.
- 1804 Chichester (Suss.) [1]
The Chichester Guide and Directory, by J. Seagrave.
- 1805 *Holden's Triennial Directory for 1805, 1806, 1807*, by William Holden of London.
- 1806 Berwick-on-Tweed (Northumb.) [2]
A Directory and Concise History of Berwick-on-Tweed, by W. Lockhead.
- 1807 Exeter (Devon) [38]
*The Exeter Pocket Journal; or, West Country Gentleman and Tradesman's
Memorandum Book*, by Trewman.
- 1808 Tunbridge Wells (Kent) [4]
The Directory; or, the Ancient and Present State of Tunbridge Wells, by
Jasper Sprange.
- 1811 Cumberland [3]
Jollie's Cumberland Guide and Directory, by F. Jollie & Sons.
- 1811 Worthing (Suss.) [3]
A Sketch of Worthing, by John Mackcoull.
- 1812 Plymouth (Devon) [11]
The Picture of Plymouth, by Henry Woolcombe.
- 1813 Walsall (Staffs.) [1*]
The History and Directory of Walsall, by Thomas Pearce.

- * But see Birmingham (1767).
- 1814 *The Commercial Directory for 1814/5*, by James Pigot of Manchester.
- 1815 Falmouth (Cornw.) [2]
The Ancient and Modern History of Falmouth, by James Trathan.
- 1816 Aberystwyth (Cardig.) [1]
The Aberystwyth Guide, by Samuel Williams.
- 1816 Weymouth (Dors.) [3]
Weymouth Guide, by G. Kay.
- 1817 Macclesfield (Ches.) [2]
The History of Macclesfield, by John Corry.
- 1817 Oldham (Lancs.) [1*]
An Historical and Descriptive Account of Oldham ... with a Directory, by James Butterworth.
- * Oldham tradesmen are included in the *Commercial Directory* by Pigot (1814), *Annual Directory Class First* by Holden (1816), *New Directory of Manchester and Salford ... Twelve Miles round Manchester* by Pigot & Deans (1821), and their ensuing issues.
- 1818 Blackburn (Lancs.) [3*]
The Blackburn Directory, by T. Rogerson.
- * Blackburn tradesmen are included in *A Topographical Survey* by Tunnickliff (1787), *Triennial Directory* by Holden (1805), and other national directories.
- 1818 Bolton (Lancs.) [3*]
The Bolton Directory, by T. Rogerson.
- * Bolton tradesmen are contained in Tunnickliff (1787), *The Universal British Directory* (1790), Holden (1805), and others.
- 1818 Preston (Lancs.) [4*]
The Preston Directory, by T. Rogerson.
- * Preston tradesmen are contained in the *Northern Directory* by Bailey (1781), Tunnickliff (1787), and other national directories.
- 1820 Gloucestershire [5]
The Gloucestershire Directory, by R. Gell & Thomas Bradshaw.
- 1820 Hastings (Suss.) [2]
Hastings Guide, by P. M. Powell.

- 1820 Rochdale (Lancs.) [1*]
A Description and Directory of Rochdale, by James Butterworth.
 * Rochdale tradesmen are also contained in Tunnicliff (1787), *The Universal British Directory* (1790), and others.
- 1820 Worcestershire [19]
Worcestershire General and Commercial Directory for 1820, by S. Lewis.
- 1822 *London and Provincial New Commercial Directory for 1822/3*, by James Pigot & Co.
 § James Pigot of Manchester started his Manchester directory in 1811, extended his business to northern and midland counties, and then to the whole British Isles. This *London and Provincial*, based on a new general survey, was the first of his successful series, which was taken over by Isaac Slater in 1844.
- 1822 Newcastle-under-Lyme (Staffs.) [3*]
The Newcastle and Pottery General and Commercial Directory, by T. Allbut.
 * Tradesmen in Newcastle-under-Lyme and other Pottery towns are included in Bailey (1781), Tunnicliff (1787), *The Staffordshire Pottery Directory* by J. Allbut & Son (1802), and others.
- 1822 Yorkshire [26]
History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of York, by Edward Baines.
 § The first of Baines' directory was of Leeds, printed by him in 1809. Here in 1822 Baines started his successful *History, Directory and Gazetteer* series for northern counties, being collaborated by William Parson, and later succeeded by William White.

Urban History Yearbook 1984 with two informative articles on directories came to hand too late to be taken into account. Compare my *chronological* list with Corfield & Kelly's Table 2: Towns and counties ranked by *number* of local directories, 1731-1830, on page 31.

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